

REMARKS

In line with the Examiner's comments in the Advisory Action dated September 26, 2008, the "connection means" language has been removed from the claims, and the invention has now been defined in structural language.

Accordingly, the switching elements must be provided between either the outputs or the inputs of the optical switching matrices, on the one hand, and the inputs or the outputs of the signal shaping units, on the other hand. As such, the switching elements cannot be provided within the switching matrices as suggested by the Examiner, as they do not connect the components required (that is, they are not between the correct inputs and outputs).

Accordingly, new main claim 23 and its dependent claims are novel and non-obvious, because Graves of record does not teach the claimed invention.

Petition is hereby made for a three-month extension of the period to respond to the outstanding Official Action to October 21, 2008. *A check in the amount of \$990.00 as the Petition fee, representing the difference between the three-month extension fee of \$1,110.00 and the already paid one-month extension fee of \$120.00, is enclosed herewith.* If there are any additional charges, or any overpayment, in connection with the filing of this response, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any such deficiency, or credit any such overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 11-1145.

Wherefore, a favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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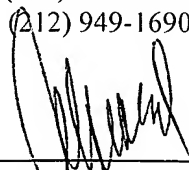
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